In recognition of breast cancer awareness month, this HOUSEHOLD HEALTH SURVEY DATA SPOTLIGHT describes the state of breast cancer screenings in Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) through an analysis of the 2018-2019 PHMC Household Health Survey (HHS) data compared to Healthy People (HP) 2020, a national benchmark measure of health objectives in the U.S. Breast cancer is the second most common cancer among American women and the leading cause of cancer deaths for women worldwide.

HP 2020 set a goal for 81.1% of all women ages 50-74 to receive a mammogram every two years. 2018-2019 SEPA HHS data reveal that 80% of women aged 50-74 years in the SEPA region received a mammogram in the past two years (age-adjusted*). Additionally, 2018-2019 SEPA HHS data revealed:

- 90% of women who self-identify as Black received a mammogram within the past two years, exceeding the HP 2020 goal. This is the highest mammogram rate compared to other racial/ethnic groups (84% Latina women, 78% White women, and 75% who identify as “other” race).
- 84% of women below the poverty line received a mammogram within the past two years, compared to 80% of women above the poverty line.
- Philadelphia, Chester, and Delaware counties met the HP 2020 goal for mammogram screenings, while Bucks and Montgomery counties have not.
There are many reasons for disparities in breast cancer screening. In the United States and in SEPA, health insurance continues to be a main reason for the difference in screening rates. While 2018-2019 SEPA HHS data demonstrates that HP 2020 goals for mammograms have been met for some populations, further consideration of these data should explore factors contributing to differences in screening rates within population groups and by geographic region.

*In line with HP 2020 methodology, mammogram percentage calculations are age-adjusted such that women 50-64 years and 65-74 years match their 2000 age-distributions in the US. Age-adjustment enables more accurate comparisons for health indicators impacted by age.